

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

tion to the problem of what should be the tactics in China. The debate on Iran found its place among those quarrels.

Two schools of thought actually developed with regard to the Iranian problem. One, represented by Vissanov, maintained that (a) Reza Khan gained power chiefly owing to British intervention and not as a result of changing social conditions in Iran; (b) Reza Shah and his army represented reactionary forces, economically linked to the traditional feudal strata of the society, and (c) therefore Reza's coup did not constitute a social revolution, but was just a change from one dynasty to another. This being the case, argued Vissanov, Iran was still in the midst of her feudal epoch and needed a radical change that would bring her into the capitalist epoch and the ensuing industrialization. To achieve this change it was first necessary to carry out a radical agrarian revolution that would result in the division of great estates among the peasantry. In other words, insofar as internal tactics were concerned, chief attention was to be focused on the peasant sector. Externally, on the other hand, Marxists should not forget that Reza Shah and his regime were essentially the tools of Great Britain.

The diases of Vissanov met with violent opposition from the other school, represented by V. A. Gurko-Kriazhin, F. Raskolnikov, and others. This school believed that the coup of Reza Shah was a manifestation of a revolutionary change in Iran's history. Owing to it Iran passed from a semifeudal into a semibourgeois phase of development. Thus the coup was in reality a bougeois revolution. To support this thesis Raskolnikov, a onetime commander of the Caspian Red Fleet that invaded Enzeli, pointed to the

composition of  
Reza Shah's army; this army, he asserted, was mainly  
composed of  
nationalistically minded elements of the intelligentsia  
and middle  
class of both antifeudal and anti-British tendencies. It  
followed,  
therefore, that Reza's advent to power was, from the  
Marxist view-  
point, a step forward.<sup>8</sup> Gurko-Kriazhin, who in his  
*Critical Medita-*  
*tions on the Coup in Persia* quoted Raskolnikov as an  
authority,  
criticized Vissanov for his abandonment of the  
Marxist platform  
with regard to the Iranian army. Vissanov, stated  
Gurko-Kriazhin,  
has committed a grave mistake in calling the army a  
"mobile force"

8 F. Raskolnikov, "Imperialisty na Vostoka," *Pravda*, no.  
158/3387, 1926.